

REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 1, 6, 8, 16, and 36 have been amended. Claims 2, 5, 7, 9-15, 17-18, and 20-30 are as originally filed. Claims 3-4, 19, 31-35, and 37 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of canceled claims 3-4, 19, 31-35, and 37 in one or more continuing applications. Claims 1-2, 5-18, 20-30, and 36 are pending.

Oath/Declaration

Applicant acknowledges the Examiner's objection regarding submitting a declaration signed by inventor George Gerba. On December 17, 2001, in response to a "NOTICE TO FILE MISSING PARTS OF APPLICATION – FILING DATE GRANTED," Applicant submitted to the USPTO a declaration executed by all the inventors, including inventor George Gerba. A copy of the executed oath, along with the accompanying response papers, is attached herewith.

Amendments to the Specification

Paragraphs [0066] and [0075] have been amended as suggested by the examiner to correct apparent informalities, which represent inadvertent typographical errors. No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claim 16 has been objected to for the use of the word “in” twice in a row. To correct this inadvertent typographical error, Applicant has accordingly amended claim 16 by removing a single instance of the word “in,” thus obviating the objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC §§ 102 and 103

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5-12, 14-17, 20, 23, 25-27, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37 under 35 USC § 102(e) as being anticipated by Reynolds et al. (US Patent No. 6799327 B1). Also, under 35 USC § 103(a), the Office Action rejects (i) claims 13, 18, 21, 32 as being unpatentable over Reynolds et al. in view of Klosterman et al. (US Patent No. 6469753 B1); (ii) claims 22 and 24 as being unpatentable over Reynolds et al. in view of Schein et al. (US Patent No. 6388714 B1); claims 18, 28, 29 as being unpatentable over Reynolds et al. in view of Alexander et al. (US Patent no. 6799327 B1); and claims 34 and 35 as being unpatentable over Reynolds et al. in view of LaJoie et al. (US Patent No. 6772433 B1). For at least the reasons presented below, Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections, and requests that these rejections be withdrawn.

More specifically, Applicant submits that these rejections have been obviated and rendered moot by the present amendment, which places the claims in condition for allowance based on the Examiner’s indication of allowable subject matter, as further describe below.

Claim 1

The Office Action objects to claim 4 as being dependent on rejected base claim 1 and intervening claim 3, but indicates that claim 4 would otherwise be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have accordingly amended claim 1 to include the limitations of base claim 4 and

intervening base claim 3. Applicant submits that, claim 1, as amended, is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of claim 1 is respectfully requested. Additionally, Applicant submits that claims 2 and 5 through 15 are also in condition for allowance at least insofar as they depend directly or indirectly on allowable claim 1.

Claim 16

The Office Action also objects to claim 19 as being dependent on rejected base claim 16, but indicates that this claim would otherwise be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has amended base claim 16 to include all of the limitations of claim 19. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 16, as amended, is now in condition for allowance, as are claims 17-18 and 20-30, which directly or indirectly depend from allowable claim 16.

Claim 36

As indicated above, the Office Action rejects claim 36 as being anticipated by U.S. 6,799,327 to Reynolds et al ("Reynolds"). Applicant has amended claim 36 to include limitations similar to those recited in amended claim 1, which, as indicated above, recites subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 36 is allowable for similar reasons, and the § 102(e) rejection of this claim should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For at least the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are patentable over the prior art of record, and the application is in condition allowance for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. To expedite prosecution of this application to allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's undersigned representative to discuss any issues relating to this application.

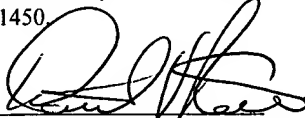
Respectfully submitted,



David V. Rossi,
Reg. No. 36,659
BROWN RAYSMAN MILLSTEIN
FELDER & STEINER LLP
900 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10022
Tel: (212) 895-2000
Fax: (212) 895-2900

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I hereby certify pursuant to 37 CFR §1.8(a) that this paper, and any accompanying papers referenced herein, are being deposited on the date indicated below with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.



David V. Rossi
Reg. No. 36,659

MARCH 6, 2006
Date